



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Agenda

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager (860)441-6630

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Natalie B. Billing, Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Joyce F. Bergeson, Laurie Kim Briggs, Genevieve Cerf, Michael Collins, Warren T. Cooper, Nancy S. Driscoll, Syma Ebbin, June Evered, Peter Fairbank, Melissa M. Finlayson, Irene B. Garagliano, Robert Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Wendy L. Hellekson, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, James Loughlin, Lisa M. Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Richard Metayer, Betsy Moukawsher, Scott Newsome, Deborah Peruzzotti, Kevin Power, Betty A. Prochaska, Don Pratt, Jack Sebastian, Jennifer Smuts, Eleanor Steere, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, and Cheryl Tilney

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-Community Room 1

Special Meeting

- A. ROLL CALL
- B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 12, 2008
- D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

This is the portion of the RTM agenda where the RTM welcomes comments from citizens. Each presentation should be limited to ten minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit written comments. Presentations should be limited to matters pertinent to Groton. The Moderator, or members through the Moderator, shall ask questions only in order to clarify the speaker's presentation. Responses may be given by the Moderator and/or by the Town Manager. Citizens should make their presentations from the lectern and state their names and addresses for the record.

- E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS
- F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:
 - 1. Financial report
 - 2. Monthly briefing
- G. LIAISON REPORTS
- H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Granatosky

2008-0245 FY2009 Budget Concerns

FY2009 BUDGET CONCERNS

Legislative History

10/8/2008 Representative Town Meeting Referred RTM Finance Committee
Rep. Steinfeld stated her concerns about the impact on local residents of the national and global economic situation. She feels that the RTM should request reductions or constraints on expenditures for the current 2009 budget. She asked if direction could be sent to the Council and Town Manager.
Moderator Billing suggested that dialogue be initiated and that this discussion be on the November agenda.

The Town Clerk suggested that discussion be in the Finance Committee and appear on the next agenda. Rep. Garagliano cautioned members that the RTM's function is as a fiscal body and that policy is initiated by Town Council.

Rep. Peruzzotti agreed with Rep. Garagliano. She stated that the RTM performed its function at the annual budget meeting. She feels that it is the Manager's job to monitor spending and make the necessary decisions and adjustments during this economic situation.

Moderator Billing referred the subject to the Finance Committee for recommendations to the full RTM.

11/12/2008 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Chairman Granatosky reported that the meeting scheduled for November 6, 2008 was cancelled and could not be rescheduled prior to this meeting. She stated the committee's report will be given at the December RTM meeting.

12/8/2008 RTM Finance Committee Discussed

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Peruzzotti

3. EDUCATION

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Fairbank

4. RECREATION

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Power

5. PUBLIC SAFETY

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt

6. PUBLIC WORKS

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Collins

7. RULES & PROCEDURES

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Evered

I. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Report of Ad Hoc Budget Committee

2008-0277 FY2010 RTM Budget Discussion

FY2010 RTM BUDGET DISCUSSION

Legislative History

10/8/2008 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Rep. Sebastian remarked that the 2010 budget discussion and guidance to the Manager needs to be started now as the Manager will be starting the budget process in December. He stated that the RTM needs to decide what services could be recommended to the Manager for elimination or reduction. He mentioned that layoffs may be necessary next year due to union contractual agreements that include annual cost of living increases and step raises that raise the budget each year.

The Moderator stated that the November agenda will include budget discussion and creation of a process to have input to the Town Manager and Town Council early in the budget process.

11/12/2008 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

The Moderator mentioned that the RTM has several options to identify services that could be recommended for reduction in the FY2010 budget prior to the RTM annual budget review in May. She stated she could make a referral to a standing committee, form an ad hoc committee, or the RTM could create another process to be carried out cooperatively with the Town Council and Board of Education.

Rep. Massett endorses having early discussion to allow a dialogue with the Town Manager to provide input

while the annual budget process is in the early development stage.

Rep. Sebastian agreed with Rep. Massett and recalled RTM actions and discussion that took place last March and April.

Citing a legal opinion from the Town Attorney to the Council, the Moderator cautioned members about providing budget guidance to the Manager that specifies a figure for the budget. She feels that the RTM should have discussions and make a list to identify services or programs that could be reduced or eliminated and provide this list to the Manager.

The Manager confirmed that he would appreciate specific services or programs being identified. He stated that decreases in revenues from the State and other sources, union contracts, benefits, and general COLA increases will impact the budget. He verified that in order to achieve a zero percent budget increase, the Town Operations budget must be reduced by approximately \$1.2 million. He voiced concern on reductions that he has recommended in the past to accommodate Council or RTM budget requests. He elaborated by providing as examples past proposals that eliminated Sunday Library hours and suspended vehicle repair work to outside agencies. He stated that these proposals were not well received, but that items such as these would achieve a sustainable reduction in those departments. The Manager feels that the RTM knows the budget well enough to provide input to his budget on what items can be reduced or eliminated. He advised members to give thought to sustainable reductions that could be in effect for several years and to make a list of those reductions.

Rep. Cerf suggested that the Town suspend contributions to the Fleet Reserve Account, reduce or eliminate the acquisition of new vehicles, eliminate travel and conference expenditures, reduce capital improvement contributions, and conserve fuel. She would like the emphasis on items that the Town does not need.

Rep. Pratt suggested having an early public hearing prior to the formulation of the Manager's budget to solicit input from citizens.

The Manager suggested that the Town receives a better response from the public if a list of recommendations is provided prior to a public hearing. He explained that travel, vehicles and other items he suggested last spring are on the table. He feels the Town must identify items such as reducing capability of in-house services and equipment and cutting programs to achieve a \$1.2 million reduction. He believes that budget reductions will be made in a combination of ways and must include cuts that can be sustainable for several years.

The Moderator asked the Manager if he could provide a list of ten to twenty items that he would recommend for reduction or elimination so that the RTM could discuss whether the public is willing to live without these services.

The Manager stated that he could make a list, but that he would like to receive comments from the RTM about their feelings on activities, services, events and programs that should be considered.

Discussion ensued with many suggestions from members. Some of the items mentioned were concessions from unions, reduction in personnel, freeze on hiring and filling vacant positions, increase in contributions from employees to health benefits and co-pays, conversion to a four day work week where applicable, elimination of free landfill days, reduction in maintenance at the dump, and reduction in the number of snow plows dispatched.

Rep. Steinfeld suggested that a similar dialogue be conducted with the Board of Education (BOE).

Rep. Sebastian agreed with Rep. Steinfeld. He would like to see measurable objectives for the \$70 million spent on the BOE budget. He feels that the unions should be faced with layoffs, rather than asked for concessions since it would force the unions to decide to concede or allow the layoffs.

Rep. Pratt asked if consideration had been given to consolidation of services from Public Works, Parks & Recreation and BOE.

11/24/2008	RTM Ad Hoc Budget Committee	Discussed
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12/3/2008	RTM Ad Hoc Budget Committee	Discussed
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J. ADJOURNMENT

